

AFRICAN ENERGY CHAMBER

# Cameroon's SNH Awards Five Exploration Blocks to Octavia and Murphy West Africa

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Cameroon's national oil company, Societe Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH), has awarded five oil and gas exploration blocks to two international operators — Octavia Energy Corporation and Murphy West Africa — as part of a deliberate push to reinvigorate the country's upstream sector. The move signals that Cameroon is actively seeking to reverse a prolonged period of declining production and limited exploration activity by attracting fresh capital and technical expertise.

The block awards to Octavia Energy Corporation and Murphy West Africa represent a meaningful step in Cameroon's upstream revival strategy. Both companies bring distinct operational profiles: Octavia has been expanding its West African footprint with a focus on frontier exploration, while Murphy West Africa is an extension of Murphy Oil's established international upstream operations. The involvement of two separate operators across five blocks suggests SNH is deliberately diversifying its partner base rather than consolidating acreage under a single major, a strategy that tends to accelerate early-phase work programmes and competitive exploration spending.

Cameroon's hydrocarbon sector has historically been anchored by maturing assets in the Rio del Rey and Douala basins, with overall production trending downward over the past decade. SNH's current licensing push is intended to open new frontier areas and offset natural decline from legacy fields. For incoming operators, this implies significant subsurface uncertainty but also the potential for material discoveries in

under-explored acreage — a risk-reward profile that typically triggers demand for high-specification drilling rigs, seismic acquisition, and well evaluation services in the near to medium term.

The broader context is also relevant. Cameroon sits at an important crossroads in its energy ambitions, simultaneously progressing its LNG ambitions through the Kribi LNG project while trying to stabilise and grow domestic crude output. SNH's willingness to award multiple blocks simultaneously indicates institutional confidence in the current investment climate and a desire to compress the timeline between licensing and first exploration wells. For service companies monitoring West and Central Africa, this convergence of upstream licensing activity and LNG infrastructure development makes Cameroon a more compelling market than it has been for several years.

Work programmes attached to the new blocks will likely require environmental baseline studies, seismic reprocessing or acquisition, and ultimately exploration drilling — activities that typically unfold over a two-to-four-year horizon from licence award. Norwegian service companies with established presences in West Africa or existing relationships with Murphy Oil and Octavia should begin early engagement now to position for upcoming tender processes.

### **Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga**

Murphy West Africa's parent company has historical ties to Norwegian service providers through prior deepwater campaigns, making early relationship activation with Murphy's technical teams a practical near-term step. Octavia Energy's frontier exploration profile suggests demand for drilling services, wireline, and formation evaluation as work programmes are formalised. Norwegian firms should monitor SNH's licence terms for minimum work obligations, which will set the timeline for concrete service procurement opportunities.

#### **PARTNER ANGLES**

- **Drilling:** Exploration drilling campaigns on new frontier acreage will require rig contracting within 18-36 months — Norwegian drilling contractors should engage

Murphy West Africa and Octavia now to understand rig specifications and well timelines.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** If exploration results are positive, fast-track development concepts in Cameroon's deepwater or shelf areas could favour FPSO solutions — Norwegian FPSO operators should monitor block locations and water depths.
- **Service:** Wireline, formation evaluation, and mud logging services will be required for initial exploration wells across all five blocks — service companies with West Africa logistics should position early.
- **Pipeline:** Potential tie-back infrastructure to existing Cameroon export terminals or new infield pipelines may be required if commercial discoveries are made — pipeline engineering firms should track subsurface results.
- **LNG:** Cameroon's parallel Kribi LNG ambitions mean gas discoveries on new blocks could feed domestic liquefaction plans — Norwegian LNG technology and process firms should maintain active dialogue with SNH.

[Original source: African Energy Chamber →](#)

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## Saga Advisory

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